

CONFIRMED SLOPER DIES - 1868-1872

By Maurice Harp

Dave Hill's piece on the Vallancey list of early Sloper dies in Bulletin 289 motivated me to collate a list of all confirmed Sloper dies from the period prior to Sloper's patent expiring. There are only three ways to truly identify a Sloper die. The first is from the sparse data provided by the Vallancey list. The second is from the Sloper records owned by the Society which unfortunately have many gaps. And lastly Sloper dies can be confirmed by date of use. If the die is known used before 13th August 1872, which was the date when Sloper's patent expired, then we have a confirmed Sloper die. Many other ways of identifying Sloper dies have been suggested (and used) in the past, such as style of the die, use on early plate numbers, user being a known user of other Sloper dies etc. However these methods can at best only give a probable Sloper identity.

The only records that the society has for the early Sloper period covers machines that were made for the customer's own use. We have no record of dies used by Sloper to supply perfinned stamps directly to customers. In order to try and establish additional Sloper dies I have been collecting dates of use from many different sources. The new Edwards catalogue, covers in auction, correspondence, articles in the Bulletin, and occasionally loose stamps can all yield a date. However over a period of twenty years I have only been able to record less than fifty dates of use prior to the Sloper patent expiry. Following is a complete list of confirmed Sloper dies in this period - just eighty dies in total. Thirty-one of these dies have been confirmed from the Sloper records and the rest have been determined from date of use and the Vallency list. Note that I have not included the "interesting dies" listed by Vallancey which may well be Sloper dies but as the wording used by Vallancey was ambiguous these have been omitted from the list. In addition many of these dies fall outside the period covered by this piece.

The table has been laid out in date order and from this it can be seen that Sloper appears to have been perforating stamps for customers from day one and that the

supply of machines to customers may have been less than fifty percent of the perfin business. The table also includes the earliest line engraved die, the pin height and the ampersand type. This clearly shows as was identified by John Nelson many years ago, that the earliest dies used an alphabet that was 4 mm high and that ampersand I was used until late in 1869. Ampersand II is associated with the 5 mm alphabet that was introduced in mid 1869 and may have been used for larger multi head dies. Ampersand III doesn't make an appearance in this list until August 1870.

Roy has analysed data in the new catalogue to determine the number of dies in use in five-year periods. This analysis has been published in earlier Bulletins. The data is primarily based on dates of use derived from stamp issues as in most instances actual dates of use are unavailable. This is often the best data that we have but the use of the stamp to set the date of use is a fairly risky business as there are countless examples of late use of stamps. However from this data it would appear that by the end of 1872 Sloper had supplied as many as four to five hundred dies. Thus the data provided in the table below probably represents less than a quarter of the dies in use in this period.

I would therefore like to make an appeal to all members to make a check of their collections and send me any data that you have of dates of use prior to 13th August 1872. I will gather together all data received and then would hope to issue an updated list of the tables. Any data sent should include stamp issue, plate number and cancel if possible. Any information that improves on the dates shown in the tables would also be useful. Clearly there are a lot more Sloper dies out there waiting to be identified and hidden in members' collections.

One last thought. We have quite a bit of information on the operation of many of Sloper's later rivals, where they operated from, when their business started and finished. If we had date information on die use in this later period - say until the end of the 19th century - we could probably make some educated guesses on who produced which dies. So if you want to dig out that data I will volunteer to pull it all together. Send to Maurice Harp, c/o Esso Engineering Europe Ltd, Esso House, Ermyn Way, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8XE.

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SLOPER DIE No.	VALLANCEY LIST	SLOPER REGISTER DATE	EARLIEST RECORD OF USE	EDWARDS CAT NUMBER	DIE	FIRST DIE	PIN HEIGHT	AMP
1868								
(Permission given 13/03/1868)								
			17/03/1868	S4920.01	SM/Co	78	4	I
2607		28/03/1868	03/04/1868	G2410.01	GH/WCo	134	4	
2609		13/05/1868	28/07/1875	J6820.01	J.S	117	4	
1869								
			06/01/1869	V1630.01	VS/Co	74	4	I
			19/02/1869	C2087.01	C.D/Co	74	4	I
2645		28/02/1869		K1760.01	KÜHNER	96	4	-
2650		03/03/1869	17/05/1869	S5840.01	S.P/Co	74	4	I
2650				L1630.01	L.D/S	X	4	I
2652	1	10/03/1869		T2570.01	T.J.A/463	103	4/4½	-
		05/04/1869		M0520.06	MB/Co	87	4	I
2662		09/04/1869	15/09/1869	S1760.01	SCOTT/Bros	101	4	-
	29		29/04/1869	C3730.02	C.I.H/S	79	4	I
	X		05/05/1869	G4350.02	GR/W	72	4	-
			26/06/1869	N2290.02	NN/NN	106	4½	-
			28/06/1869	G4300.01	GR/E	79	4	-
			19/07/1869	#0420.02	533/T.H	97	4½	-
			18/08/1869	S6810.01	S.S/S.S	101	4	-
2672		01/09/1869		J1030.01	J.B/T/Co.	106	4½	II
			24/09/1869	R4890.01	R&S/M.L	97	4	I
2702		27/09/1869		J3210.01	J&G/OxSt	102	4	I
			07/10/1869	S7160.03	S.T/B	102	5	II
			08/10/1869	N1785.01	NIC/HOL/SON	102	4	-
2704		12/10/1869	21/03/1870	F1790.01	F.H/C	106	5½	II
			24/10/1869	R4890.02	R&S/M.L	97	4	I
2700		05/11/1869	13/12/1869	F3850.01	F.S/L	106	5	-
2701		10/11/1869	02/07/1878	P2210.01	P&G/OxSt	110	4	I
2703		01/12/1869		R1425.01	R.D.F/Co	120	4	I
2674		11/12/1869		M0690.01	M.B/M	107	5½	-
2676	3	11/12/1869		B0620.03	B.B/Co	100	5	II
			13/12/1869	S3610.01	S.H/S	92	4	I
2675		23/12/1869		W3095.01	W.G/Co	114	4	I
	10		24/01/1876	C0960.04	C&B/SOHO	81	4	I
	11			C6450.01	CRAMER/Co	-	4	I
	X		(1869?)	I0370.01	I.C/Co/B	102	4½/4	I
	X			?	J.C.B/Co.	-		-
1870								
2669		14/01/1870			Unknown			
2664		20/01/1870		J5475.01	J.M/S	110	5½	II
2667		20/01/1870		J3160.01	J&G/M	107	5	II
2670		27/01/1870		T0480.02	T.B/Co	102	5½	II
2663		26/02/1870		C5930.03a	CP/Co	102	4½	II

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1870 (contd)								
2666		01/03/1870		J4090.01	J&I/B&G	114	4	I
2668		03/03/1870	03/09/1877	F3890.01	F&S/M	95	4½/5	II
2665		30/03/1870	03/09/1879	C5290.01	CnCo	117	4½	-
2741		01/04/1870	30/07/1874	B0640.01	BB&Co	107	5½	II
2734		12/05/1870		F2130.04	F&J	106	4	I
2733		17/05/1870	28/11/1873	L1970.01	LEVY	125	4	-
2671		16/06/1870		M0260.01	MAW	110	4½	-
		18/07/1870		G4830.01	G.S.S/CoLd	117	4½	-
			29/07/1870	P2640.01	P.J.&Co	101	4	I
2762		14/08/1870	20/01/1871	S2050.02	SDB/&S/M	109	4	I
			00/08/1870	K0670.01	KEEN/&Co.	106	4½	III
	89		15/10/1870	H7490.01	HUTH	100	4	-
2757		07/12/1870	24/09/1903	W3920.01	W.H.&T	122	5½	II
			16/12/1870	T3790.01	TRAVERS	92	3	-
			18/12/1870	B1560.01	B&Co/L&B	106	4½	III
	X		(1870?)	A1650.01	ADAM	140	4	-
	X		11/07/1874	I2170.06M	I&R/M	103	5½	III
1871								
			17/01/1871	S4930.02	S.M.&Co	79	5/4	I
			24/03/1871	T0470.01	T/B&Co	111	4½	III
	X		27/03/1871	G4350.01	GR/W	94	4/3	-
			12/04/1871	M1280.01	Mcl	100	5,3,5½	-
			02/05/1871	M0810.01	MBW	107	4	-
			15/05/1871	F1640.01	F.G.&Co	110	5	II
			30/05/1871	B0630.01	B..B/&Co	110	5½/4½	III
			30/05/1871	I1220.01	I.H.S.&Co	119	4½	III
			01/09/1871	#0420.01	533/T.H	113	4½	-
1872								
			01/02/1872	N2520.01	N&P	122	4½	III
		16/02/1872		T4020.02	T.S	118	5	-
		16/02/1872		L0030.03	L&A		5½	III
			20/02/1872	G3260.01	GLYN	102	4	-
			03/03/1872	#0710.01	9/RvG	134	5½	-
			02/04/1872	D4790.01	D.T&F	111	4	I
2868	X	16/04/1872		H7680.01	H.W/C	118	5	-
			11/05/1872	B3695.01	BIRD/Co	120	4	-
			28/05/1872	T1010.03	T&Co	86	4½	III
			12/06/1872	S7150.05	ST/&B	98	5½	II
			08/09/1871	C5620.01	CORY/C	118	4	-
	X		08/08/1872	I2170.04b	I&R/M	117	5½	III
		c1872		B2810.04	B&F/L	117	4	III
	X		23/12/1872	C7760.01	C.T.S.&Co	120	4½	III